

assist him. They were treated civilly, but the wary Amír Mahomed Khán distrusted them.

I shall here close a subject, which has drawn me to greater length, than I had contemplated when I commenced to discuss it, and I fear I have added little to our knowledge of the Síáposh. It will be something, if I have succeeded to shew the interest attaching to these singular people, not merely as regards their own history and origin, but in connection with those of their neighbours; and how worthy the attempt would be to dispel the mystery which envelopes so interesting a portion of the human race.



V. — *Narrative of adventures in a Journey from Kándahár to Shikárpúr.*

I proceeded alone from Kándahár with the intention of overtaking a káfila, which had left two days before in progress to Shikárpúr. Although perfectly aware of the danger of travelling in these countries, particularly for a stranger, understanding that the káfila would march slowly, being burthened with women and children, and judging the danger would not be excessive within two or three days from the capital, I started in the expectation of reaching the káfila the second march.

Arriving at the last of the villages in the neighbourhood of the city, I entered it with a view of procuring food, but could prevail on no one to prepare it. At a short distance from the village, I observed a black tent, which I presumed was occupied by a pastoral family, who being more hospitable than the fixed inhabitants, I repaired to it, and found people who could not speak Persian, and I being ignorant of Pashto, we were mutually at a loss. I succeeded in conveying the information that "doudí" or bread was required, and that they should be paid for it. To this they agreed, and while the wife was kneading the dough, the husband's attention was attracted by the sight of a drinking vessel which I had purchased at Kándahár, and he took or rather seized it, returning me the few pais I had previously given him. Nor did he stay here, but absolutely searched me, and my coin which I had bound in the webcord of my perjamas underwent his inspection; — the vicinity of the village alone deterred him from making it booty. Bread was at length served; while eating it, I could comprehend the discourse of the family related to me, and I heard the word káfila pronounced several times, which encouraged me to

hope it was near at hand. Having smoked the chillam, as is invariably the custom in these countries after meals, I took leave of my host, enquiring by signs the direction of the high road to Shikárpúr. He understood me, and directed my sight to a whitish topped peak among the distant hills, under which he asserted the road winded.

Having yet two or three hours of day light, I dashed across the country between me and the hills ; — without a sign of habitation, and came upon a large swamp of briny water, which I had some difficulty in clearing. At length reached a large solitary building, uninhabited and in decay, which had probably been formerly a serái : here were two or three chambers in decent preservation, in one of which I took up my quarters for the night, although the doing so was not unattended with danger, as from the remains of recent fires it was evident the place was frequented ; and I inferred that in so sequestered a spot, and distant from any path or road, it might be the resort of robbers, or other doubtful characters. Recommending myself to Divine protection, I resigned myself to sleep, and awoke in the morning, having had no other companions than pigeons, whose numerous nests covered the vaulted roofs of the buildings, and no other visitants than a few owls, that, with their large flapping wings and discordant cries, occasionally broke in upon my repose.

Started and nearing the hills, observed the village called Kárez Hájí. The city is not visible from hence, a small detached line of eminences, Koh Zákkar, intervening. Reached a Kárez without water, and made for a building which I found to be a deserted flour mill. I could not from it, discover the road I was in quest of, but concluded I should gain it by following the line of sand hills which now appeared on the right, towards which I accordingly rode. Approached them, when a horseman, one of the the wild Patáns, in the uncouth garments of his tribe, galloped from them. He rode towards me, and, I believe, asked me the road to some place or other, but as I was unable either to understand him, or to return an answer, his vociferations were to no effect, and applying to me all the curses and abusive epithets his language furnished, he left me, and galloped off to my great satisfaction. I now descried in the distance a string of camels, which were, without doubt, pacing the desired road, and I hoped might be the káfila I was seeking. Gained a road, in which were abundant prints of the feet of men, horses, and camels ; there was no person in sight that I could ask if the road was the one for Shikárpúr, however I entered it without hesitation, and proceeded five or six cosses without meeting or seeing any one. To the right and and left were hills : to the right of sand, to the left black rock slight-

ly covered with soil. The road in fact described the line where the sand desert connected with the clear country. There was no vestige of inhabitants. Found the camels I had seen to be returning from Kándahár, whither they had conveyed wood from Robát. This mortified me for the moment, as it left me dubious as to the road, but on passing the return camels, which had halted, I again perceived the traces of men, horses and camels, as before, and the rinds of pomegranates, which had manifestly been that day only thrown on the ground. This encouraged me to hope the káfila was very near; arrived at a Kárez to the right of the road, the water of bad quality and unpalatable though clear and transparent; continued marching with still the same signs of the caravan, when the shades of evening began to obscure the horizon. At the distance of a quarter of a mile from the road, I observed two or three trees, which with the circumstance of the Kárez before mentioned, winding in the same direction, indicated the presence of some village. Found about one hundred and twenty tents arranged in a semi-circular form, in front of which were two spots enclosed by stones which served as masjids. It being the time of evening prayer, I went up to one of these, and saluted with the usual Salám Alíkam, and was invited to sit down. When prayers were finished, one of the men decently apparelled, said to me "Doudí kourí, dil ter rází" which signifies "if you will eat bread, come here." I accepted the invitation, and accompanied him to his tent, which was well furnished, after the fashion of the country, and before the entrance were picketted three tolerable horses. The whole had an appearance of easy circumstances, indeed of comparative opulence. Bread was cooked expressly for me, water was brought to wash my hands before eating, and I was encouraged to eat heartily. I felt perfectly at ease, and was doing justice to my entertainment, having fasted throughout the day, when another man came in, and seated himself by my side. The repast being finished, the new visitant applied a rather rude slap on my cheek, at which I merely smiled, presuming it was intended as a joke, and although a severe one, yet as these savages understand little of decency, and being alone among many, it was but common prudence to pass it off lightly. He then asked me for my upper garment, this I refused, still thinking him disposed to be merry. I however, found to my cost he was not trifling, for he despoiled me of it by pure force, as well as of my head dress, &c. In short left me nothing but my perjamas and shoes. He also applied two or three additional slaps on the cheek, and a liberal allowance of terms of abuse in Persian, which was all he knew of that language. This he did in ridicule of my ignorance of Pashto, which he was conti-

nually urging me to speak. During this time, my worthy host, the master of the tent, encouraged and abetted my despoiler, and received some pais which were in a pocket of my upper garment. The clothes were detained by the other ruffian, who, after a while, conducted me to his tent, one much smaller, and of mean appearance. He bade me sit down by the fire, and warm myself, and in due time spread felts on the ground by the fire side, which were to serve me for a bed, and informed me, I might repose myself; cautioning me, as I understood him, not to attempt to escape during the night, for I should be certainly seized by the dogs. I stretched myself on my sorrowful bed, and ruminated on my deplorable situation, consoling myself, however, that it did not appear the intention of my friend to despoil me of my perjâmas, in the webcord of which, I have before stated, was my small stock of money — and calculating on certainly reaching the kâfila the next day, if allowed to depart in the morning, and that I should be able to repair my deficiency of raiment. Still my situation was sufficiently wretched, yet from the fatigue of the day's march, — the power of a naturally strong constitution, — and the presence of the fire, — I shortly fell asleep, and enjoyed uninterrupted repose during the night, awaking only in the morning when kicked by my host, who called me a Kâfr or infidel, for not rising to say prayers, which he presently repeated on the very clothes of which he had despoiled me the preceding evening. I was now led into the tent in which I had been originally entertained, where several other men were assembled. Here I was beat with sticks and cords, and had some large stones thrown at me. I made no doubt but it was intended to destroy me. I therefore collected my spirits, and resolved to meet my fate with firmness, and betray no marks of weakness or dejection. Thanks to heaven, it was ordered otherwise: I was asked if I was an U'zbek, an Hazâra or Baloch. The latter question was many times repeated, but I persisted in the negative, being conscious that the Baloch tribes were the enemies of these men, (the Nûr Zais) and I asserted that I was from Kach Mekrán, they not having the least notion of an European. This answer might have proved unfortunate, for I have since learned that Mekrán is a component part of Balochistân, but the geographical knowledge of these savages was no better than my own, and they stumbled over the words Kach Mekrán, without being able to divine what country it could be. At length, the sun being considerably elevated, they dismissed me in the state of nakedness to which they had reduced me, telling me, “dâggar lâr-dî warza” or “take that road.” I walked about thirty paces, a few stones being complaisantly thrown after me, when I was hailed

by a man to return, and eat bread before I went. I was compelled reluctantly to retrace my steps, as a refusal might have involved my destruction, and I again came in contact with the ruffians. Instead of giving me bread, they renewed their consultations concerning me, and I gathered from their discourse that it was in question to bind me, and reduce me to slavery. My case now assumed a serious aspect, yet I was not wholly depressed, as I reflected that the road to Kándahár was large and well defined, and that any night would take me to the Dúráni villages, where I knew they would not dare follow me. It happened, however, that I was now observed by two or three aged venerable looking men, who were standing before the entrance of the tent, on the extreme left of the semi-circle, which was larger than any of the others, and had before it a spear fixed in the ground, the symbol, I presumed, of authority. They beckoned to me, and I went to them, followed by the men who had so ill treated me, and many others. A question was put to one of these aged men, who I found was the Múlla or priest, if it was not lawful, according to the Korán, to detain me as a slave, the singular reason being alleged, that they had performed the rites of hospitality towards me the night before.

The Múlla instantly replied, that it was neither just nor lawful, nor according to the Korán, but decidedly to the contrary. Perceiving the Múlla to be a man of some conscience, I asked him if he understood Persian; on his replying a little, I related to him how I had been treated; he expressed the greatest regret, and severely rebuking the offenders, urged them to restore my effects; this they were unwilling to do, and much debate ensued, in which, being supported by the Múlla, I took a part, and ventured to talk loudly. To one of my questions to the man who had the most ill treated me, and struck me on the cheek, if he was a Mússúlmán, he replied, “ bishák Mússúlmán ” or that he was one in every respect. As if my misfortunes were never to cease, my money, which until now had escaped observation, was seized by one of the men who asked what I had concealed there. The Múlla desired him to desist, saying “ oh! merely a few onions, or something of that kind,” but the fellow wrenched out the webcord from my perjámas, and with eyes glittering with delight, unrolled the little money I had. The Múlla assumed a stern authoritative tone, as did the other inmates of the tent; he seized the robber by his arm, and ordered him to restore the money, and other property. His orders were obeyed,—every thing was restored, except the horse, concerning which much discussion arose. Finding it unlikely that I should recover it, and delay being fatal to me, I begged the Múlla to take it from the ruffians for himself.

After receiving the Múlla's benediction, I made for the high road. I might have proceeded one hundred yards, when a man came running after me, and, sword in hand, demanded my money. Observing two young men approaching with matchlocks, notwithstanding his menaces, I refused to deliver it until their arrival. They fortunately understood a little Persian, and asserting that I was a stranger, prevailed on the robber to depart. I asked them where they were going, in the hopes of finding companions; they replied, fowling. Gaining the high road, I proceeded rather depressed in mind, as I could not conceive that the ruffians would suffer me to depart unmolested, after having had a sight of money, — and I walked along with the almost certainty of being followed. For a considerable distance, I fell in with no one, until I arrived at a spot where the road branched off in two directions, where was also a grave newly prepared, and over which were seated fifteen or twenty men. I would have avoided their observation, but they discovered and hailed me, asking if I had any snuff or tobacco: I replied in the negative. One of them came, and taking me by the arm led me to the grave, where I had to submit to a variety of questions, but was finally dismissed without receiving any injury. The road here gradually ascends for a short distance, and then again descends. It is the point where the roads from Quetta and Shoráwak meet. I had gained the descent, when one of the men, without doubt, an inhabitant of the village, to which probably his fellows belonged, came after me and asked for my money. As he was alone, and had no other weapons than stones, I might have resisted him, but fearing the other men would come to his assistance, I produced the money, and representing, as well as I could, that the Shikárpúr road was long, and that food was requisite, I succeeded in preserving the half of it. Chancing to use some expressions in which the word Mússúlmán occurred, he took offence, and seizing my neck was about to proceed to acts of violence. I also prepared for defence, deeming it as well to die fighting as passive before such a wretch, when some camels appeared on the top of the ascent, with four or five attendants.

He now loosed his hold, as I did mine, and was about to depart, when I informed the camel drivers of the robbery, at which they merely smiled. Seeing it, he returned, and was willing to renew hostilities. It being an object with me to accompany the camels, which were going my road, and still having some money and my clothing, I used my endeavours to pacify him, which with some ado was accomplished.

While a stone is within reach, the Patáns of these countries are

never at a loss for offensive weapons. I have seen severe wounds inflicted by these missiles. They assert that Cain killed Abel with stones, which appears to have established a precedent for their use.

One of the camel drivers told me to mount a camel, but I could not catch one. I learned they were proceeding to Robát. They were those I had passed the day before. We marched four or five koss, when they halted, and told me that in the evening they should go to Robát. I would have continued my journey, but alas! I was to encounter robbery anew. My clothing and money were now taken, and I was entirely stripped. In return for my perjamas, they gave me a ragged pair, which did not cover my knees; my shoes alone escaped, being either too large, or too small for their several feet. I did not part with my money or apparel very willingly, or very peaceably; in fact, one of the ruffians unsheathed his sword, but the others forbid violence. I appealed to them as men and Mússúlmáns, but this only excited their laughter.

I was still arguing with them, when two men made their appearance on the road: the Robát men conversed with each other, conjecturing they might be companions of mine, and began looking at their own means of defence. They however felt perfectly easy, being five in number, and armed. The new comers proved to be Hájis, a name properly belonging to such as have made a pilgrimage to Mecca, but assumed also by those who are going to the holy place, or pretend they are so. One of them had a smattering of Persian, and endeavoured, but ineffectually, to procure the return of my effects. As these men were proceeding to join the káfila, I accompanied them, the camel drivers much wishing to detain me, willing as they said to entertain me the night at Robát.

I was now destitute, a stranger in the centre of Asia, unacquainted with the language, which would have been most useful to me, and from my colour, exposed on all occasions to notice, enquiry, ridicule, and insult. Still I did not despair, and although I never doubted the rule of Divine Providence, yet had I done so, my preservation in so many cases of extreme danger, with the continual birth of circumstances to extenuate misery, would have removed scepticism, and carried to my mind the conviction of the existence of an omniscient and benevolent Being, who does not neglect the meanest object of his creation.

It was some consolation to find, that the káfila was not far off, and with my new companions I proceeded without apprehension of further plunder, having nothing to be deprived of. I had moreover the satisfaction of inferring, that any change in my circumstances must

be for the better, as it could not well be for the worse. On the road we first met a horseman, who desired and received the benediction of the Hájí. This was given, the applicant turning his back towards the Hájí, who repeated or mumbled something, in which the words *dúniah*, or, wealth, and *bismillah*, or, in the name of God, were the only ones audible; at the close, the Hájí stroked his own beard, and gave the barbarian two or three slaps on the back, which completed the blessing. The Patán salamed with much respect, and departed well satisfied. In this rencontre I passed unnoticed. A little farther on, we met two men, who came across the hills on foot, but tolerably dressed. They also received the Hájí's benediction, and discoursed a short time, enquiring news of the Baloch tribes, who it appeared had but a few days before scoured the country, and plundered the villages. I afforded matter of mirth to these men, and they expressed themselves much surprised at seeing a man who could not speak Pashto. The Baloches, spoken of, were the Tokís of Sístán, formidable marauders under the orders of the notorious Khán Jahán Khán of Illamdár.

Until now we had been on either side surrounded by low hills: — they ceased here and we had before us the extensive plain of Robát. There was nothing in the shape of trees, and the only objects relieving the monotony of the scene were two or three buildings in the distance, apparently the square killas, the common defensive erections of these people, and to which their skill in military architecture is hitherto confined. Before us, on the high road, whose course being straight, is visible for some distance, was a building with arched roofs after the Kàndahár mode, which on reaching, we found to be a *houz*, or reservoir of rain water. The building was substantial, and the water good. It is a work of utility, as I saw no other water between the village I left in the morning and Robát, a distance, I suppose of fifteen or twenty miles. It is called *Houz Maddat Khán*, from its founder, a *Dúrání Sirdár* of some eminence in the reign of *Taimúr Sháh*. The embers of the fires kindled by the men of the caravan who had halted here a while in passing, were still alive. About two or three miles farther on approached the assemblage of tents on the plain of Robát. They covered the plain for a large extent, and must certainly have been five or six hundred in number. My companions went to the nearest of them with the view of procuring food and lodging for the night, and directed me to a ruined fort, where they told me I should find the *káfila*.

These Hájís, or men representing themselves as such, travel about the country subsisting on charity, and, as ignorance begets super-

stition, and superstition begets dread, they are looked up to with much awe and respect by these savages, who tremble at the very name of Mecca. Their character for sanctity ensures them the best of entertainment, in return for which they give blessings, or if able to write, scraps of paper, which contain, as their credulous clients believe, preservatives, charms, and antidotes against all disasters and diseases. In these countries, where travelling to other individuals is attended with so much danger, they proceed in perfect security. In more civilized countries, and in the towns, they are treated with less respect; and although their character for sanctity is not disputed, they are usually told that Allah or God will supply their wants, and are reduced to sit in the masjids—the common resort of the destitute.

On my road to the káfila I was accosted by a Patán, who asked if I was not a Hájí, I said Hoh, or yes, when he uttered an exclamation relative to the wretchedness of my condition. Found the káfila encamped under the fort wall, and joining it, it was no easy matter to satisfy the curiosity of the several individuals composing it, but this accomplished, I became an object of neglect, and I began to fear the possibility of suffering from want among these people. I went to Khádar Khán, the principal man in the company, and stating my case, requested his assistance during the journey; he frankly replied, he would give me none, and farther said, I should not accompany the káfila. Night coming on, fires were kindled, round which the individuals of the káfila respectively grouped. Having no other clothing than the tattered perjámas of the camel drivers, and the cold being so intense that ice was found on the water in the morning, of the thickness of perhaps three quarters of an inch, I suffered accordingly, and ventured to approach the fires, invitation being out of the question. I did so only to meet repulses; I was rejected from all of them, some alleging I was a Káfr, others no reason at all. In this desperate state of affairs, I was thinking of hazarding a visit to the tents, when a poor but humane fellow came and led me to his bivouac. He said he was but a poor man, and lived coarsely, but that I should partake of his fare during the journey; that he had absolutely no clothing, or I should not continue naked. My new friend, named Mahomed Alí, was one of four associates, who had two or three camels laden with pomegranates. I gladly availed myself of his offer, and returned him my acknowledgments. He kindled his fire, and seated me by it, desiring me on no account to be dejected, that God was merciful, and would provide every thing needful. I now became easy as to subsistence, and considered myself as one of the káfila, whose composition I shall here briefly describe.

The most important personage was Khádar Khán, Bárák Zai, and son of Júma Khán, formerly hákam or governor of Shikárpúr, and now in the service of Walí Mahomed, Laghári, the Nawáb Vazír of Lárkhána in Upper Sinde. Júma Khán was a brother of the reigning chiefs in Kándahár, Kábal, &c. but whether that his descent was tainted, that he had slender ability, or that he had little ambition, he had separated himself from them. His son Khádar Khán carried on trade, and trafficked largely in horses. Business had led him to Kándahár, where he had carried his women and children; he was now escorting them back. He had a number of attendants and horses, and a plentiful shew of tent equipage for the accommodation of his ladies, who on the march travelled in camel Kajáwas or panniers. His nephew, Abdúlah Khán, a fine young man of extraordinary height, accompanied him. Next in consequence, was one they termed by way of respect, Hákamzáda, who was the Báshí or director of the káfila, although Khádar Khán, or rather Abdúlah Khán appeared to order the marches. There were also two or three Shikárpúr Saiyads well mounted and apparelled, and a well fleshed jovial horseman in the employ of the Sind chiefs:—beside these, were a few poor traffickers, who drove camels, asses, &c. laden with fruits, snuff, and miscellaneous articles. Hákamzáda owned the greater part of the merchandize in the káfila, consisting of fruit, fresh and dried, madder, and carraways.

I was seated with my new friends, when a youth travelling without means came, and said he would put me in the way of procuring food for the night. I paid no great attention to him, feeling easy on that score, but my companions told me to go with him. I therefore obeyed, and was provided with a formidable long pole, for what purpose I was at a loss to conjecture; the youth and another Dúrání, destitute, but well dressed, being similarly armed. We then made for the tents, nearing which my associates commenced howling, Allah, Allah, Allah, and the poles, I found, were to keep the dogs at bay, while the begging of bread was carried on. The appeal for charity at no one tent was ineffectual, the inmates hastening to afford their mites, many even asking if flour or bread was needed. Our begging was carried on systematically; the youth, who appeared perfect in his part, and accustomed to such scenes, going towards the entrance of the tents, and stating we were Hájís, while I and the Dúrání, by playing our long poles, had to contend with dogs, assailing us on all sides, as if conscious we were demanding the scraps which they considered their due. About thirty or forty pounds weight of bread was procured, of which I merely received as much

as sufficed for the evening's meal. The cold encreasing as the night advanced, I suffered much from the want of clothing: my companions on preparing for sleep, furnished me with a quantity of wood, to enable me to keep the fire alive during the night, over which I was to sit. I did so with my knees drawn up to my chin, nevertheless the severity of the cold was seriously felt. Towards morning, my situation being observed by a Mogal soldier in the service of Khádar Khán, he came and threw over my shoulders, a postín or great coat, if I may so express myself, made of the skins of dumbas or large tailed sheep, the leather excellently prepared, and the fleece well preserved. They are the general winter habits of all classes in Khorasán, and are certainly warm and comfortable.

I endeavoured to rise, and return thanks, when I found, that what with the heat of the fire in front, and the intensity of the cold behind, my limbs were contracted, and fixed in the cramped position in which I had been so long sitting. I now became alarmed lest I should not be able to accompany the káfila, nor should I, had it started early in the morning as káfilas generally do; — but this with a view to the convenience of the women, did not march until the sun was high above the horizon. This was a fortunate circumstance, as the solar heat gradually relaxed the stiffness of my limbs, and as I became warm in walking the pain lessened. I know not whether to impute my misfortune here to the presence of the fire, or to the cold. My legs and arms were covered with blotches, and at their respective joints were reduced to a state of rawness. The latter evil disappeared in a few days, but the pains in the limbs continued to distress me exceedingly for four or five months, and have not wholly left me to this day, and probably never will. The present of this postín was undoubtedly the means of my preservation, as I never should have been able to have passed another night in similar nudity, and the cold, I afterwards found, encreased for the next eight or ten marches.

The marches were not of extreme length, and I contrived tolerably well to keep up with the káfila, starting with the asses, which went on first, when, if unable to keep pace with them, I was sure of having the camels which followed them, behind, and which were always considerably in the rear. In this manner I was secure from interruption, on the road, by the inhabitants of the country.

We made five or six marches over a wild and dreary country, the surface of the soil thinly chequered with low stunted bushes and plants, amongst which the terk, and Káhshútar, or camel grass, were the most prominent. There were no fixed habitations, and few traces

of cultivation. From the plain of Robát we entered that of Búldak, slight rises, through which an easy road led, marking their boundaries. It was, if possible, more forbidding in aspect than the former, and there was much of its extent occupied by sand hillocks.

In one of our marches we passed a body of men, women, and children, migrating with their property to some more genial climate during the winter. The men had most of them matchlocks, but I suspect no ammunition, as they begged flints and powder, and a small quantity of each given them elicited many thanks. These people crossed our route. Leaden bullets with the men of this country, I believe, are generally out of the question, having seen them, in many instances, making substitutes of mud, which they mould and dry, and place in the ground, as they say, to harden. With such projectiles they contrive to kill large fowls, &c. During our progress, we one day fell in with a large deposit of wheat chaff, intended as winter provender for cattle. It was opened, and all the available animals of the káfila laden with its contents; Khádar Khán and the káfila Báshi directing the operation, and remaining with the mounted men, while it was carried on.

We here saw no inhabitants, although from this deposit, and the existence of water at some distance to the right, it was natural to infer that there were some in the neighbourhood. I could not here help drawing a conclusion, that if these káfilas are liable to insult and extortion among these people, they in some measure deserve it, for, in no case, where plunder could be safely perpetrated, was it omitted. The sheep or goat that strayed into their tract was invariably made booty, and if they met with but a few tents, they did not fail to procure flour, roghan, krút, &c. without payment, which the inmates gave fearing worse treatment. At one of our halts by a pond of rain water, called Dand Ghúlai, a faquí mounted on a small horse without saddle, came from an adjacent collection of tents, which we did not see, and demanded alms, expatiating much on the splendour of the tents, and on the wealth in the káfila. Abdúlah Khán asked him for his blessing, and, while he was receiving it, some of the men were engaged in fixing a cord around the neck of a large sized dog, which accompanied the faquí, and they succeeded in purloining it without notice. At this halting place large melons were brought to the káfila for sale. The Hájís, as usual, when any tents were near, went into them to pass the night, procuring better entertainment there than among the men of the káfila; indeed throughout Khorázan, among the Dúránis, charity appears extinct, as does also, with few exceptions, the existence of any kind of social or benevolent feel-

ing. We at length reached a formidable range of hills, at the entrance into which it was intended to have halted, but it was discovered that there was no water in the spots, where it was usually found. Khádar Khán was much mortified, as it was evening, and it became necessary to cross the range at once, a labor he would have been glad to have reserved for the morrow. Men were however despatched on all sides to search for water, and one returned with a piece of ice, which he exhibited as evidence of his discovery, but the water although near trickled from the crevices in the heights above, and would have been useless with respect to the animals; moreover to encamp close to it was impossible. In this dilemma, two of the Atchakzai appeared, — they stated that they were acquainted with water very near, but would not discover it, unless they received grapes, raisins, snuff, tobacco, &c, in short something of every thing they supposed might be in the káfila. Khádar Khán strove to induce them to moderate their demands, and much time was wasted in fruitless parley. The gesticulations of the savages, had I been free from pain, would have sufficiently diverted me, as well as the stress they laid on *ōbō*, as they call water, with the enormity of their demands. The Khán unable to come to terms with them, gave the order to advance.

We now ascended a steep and difficult path, down which the water oozing from the rock trickled down. There was also much ice, and many of the camels slipped, — the women had previously been removed, and seated on horses. This ascent naturally involved a troublesome descent, and we had to pass another elevation equally precipitous before we reached the summit of the pass, from which the extensive plain of Peshing burst upon the sight. At the bottom of the pass, we found ourselves at the head of a darra, had a good place to encamp in, water in fair quantity from springs near at hand, with plenty of fuel, the small wood on the adjacent hills. This pass, that of Kozhak, was the only one we had hitherto met with, and the only obstacle we had encountered on the route, which, since leaving Kándahár, had been otherwise free from natural difficulties. The mountain range, over which it leads, has considerable length, and while here it forms, the western boundary of Peshing, lower down it marks, the eastern boundary of Shoráwak. Besides the principal pass of Kozhak, there are two other well defined and frequented ones to the south, those of Roganí and Bédh, both crossing into Shoráwak; — by the first of these the Lora river winds through the range.

In the morning we continued our progress through the darra, with hills on either side, of inferior altitude. There were numerous mi-

mosa trees, from the trunks and branches of which gum plentifully exuded,—it was eaten eagerly by the men of the káfila, but I found it bitter and unpalatable. On arrival at a small hut constructed of the boughs and branches of trees, two or three men rushed from it, who, under the pretence of examination with reference to duty, rifled all the packages carried by the asses, and forbid further progress until their claims were satisfied. These men refused either to give water, or to disclose where it could be found, and only after receiving a quantity of tobacco, wou'd they give fire to enable the ass drivers to smoke their chillams. Both parties were in full debate, when Khádar Khán and the horsemen, hitherto in the rear, came up, and instantly ordered an advance, it being nonsense to hear duty talked of in such a place, and by such men. I was, in truth, surprised at the audacity of these fellows, who were nearly naked; nor could it ever have been imagined, that such miserable beings were entitled to collect duties. They were without weapons, and probably calculated on the stupidity or timidity of the ass drivers, who they might also have thought, were proceeding alone. During their search, a Korán received the marks of their respect, being applied to the eyes and lips.

On clearing this darra, we entered the plain of Peshing; to the right, on rising ground, stood a square castle, belonging to Abdúlah Khán, Sirdár of the Atchakzais. There were two or three mulberry trees near it, and some cultivation of wheat, lucerne and melons. Khádar Khán and his mounted men rode up to the castle, for the purpose of arranging duty matters, and wished the whole of the káfila to have accompanied him, but the men would not consent, fearing the rapacity of the Atchakzai Sirdár, should they place themselves in his power. We, therefore, under the orders of Abdúlah Khán, the nephew, passed on, and crossed a small river, on which was a village, the houses built of mud. We then directed our course towards another village, a circular tower in which, was visible far off. There we halted; the water supplied from a pond, the river being considerably distant. Khádar Khán joined us, and expressed anger that the káfila had not accompanied him, as the affair of duty would have been arranged.

The men, who now came from the village to claim duty, were most beggarly dressed, and without shoes. A most contentious scene occurred, their demands being exorbitant, and nothing that evening was settled. These officers of the customs stayed with us during the night, and were most oppressive visitants, admitting no refusal of any thing they asked for. The next day passed also in stormy

discussion, and the evening approached without any satisfactory result, when the káfila Báshí seized one by the neck, and pushed him towards the horses, telling him to count them, it appearing that the number of horses in the caravan was disputed. To count twenty, or twenty five, actually exceeded the ruffians numerical ability, — it was necessary to count them for him. The spirited conduct of the káfila Báshí seemed to have its effect in bringing matters to a close; money was now paid, and matters were considered settled. The men, however, did not leave us, and towards night urged fresh claims as to the asses, and they with their burthens were carried into the village for inspection. In the morning, a new subject for altercation was found, and a well dressed youth made his appearance, who wrote Persian, and officiated as scribe, — nor was it until the day was considerably advanced, that the Káfila was permitted to proceed, fees having been given to the scribe and others.

I could not estimate the degree of danger attending our stay here, but Khádar Khán, who on the score of his family, had the most at stake, was continually walking to and fro in great agitation, and frequently uttered fervent ejaculations that God would deliver him from the hands of the Atchakzais. It would have given me pleasure had I known Pashto, to have learned what passed during the debates at this place, for undoubtedly much eloquence was displayed on both sides. I could glean, that the Atchakzai ridiculed the menace of forcing a passage without payment of duty, and that they asserted it was much better to have Hindús to deal with, who without parley or hesitation paid five rupees for each ass, whereas they could only procure two from a Mússúlmán, and that after much dispute. The conduct of the men, who on the plea of collecting duty, fixed themselves upon the káfila, was most outrageous and extraordinary. They insisted that food should be prepared for them, and would not allow it to be cooked, kicking over the pots with their feet, and then with their closed fists scattering the fire. It was evident they wished rather to annoy than to be well entertained, and the consequence was they were served with meat nearly raw, which they devoured like cannibals. The two evenings we halted here, the men of the village assembled in great numbers around us, (for curiosity merely), seating themselves on the ground, at a little distance. None of them had weapons, which are perhaps scarce among them. Abdúlah Khán, their Sirdár, had, I was informed, a piece of ordnance, possibly a jingál, at his castle.

Leaving the village, our course led through a small belt of tamarisk jangal, clearing which we halted between a village and river

close to it, the same probably we had before passed. The stream was in a deep sunken bed, and there are no wheels on its banks to make the water available for purposes of irrigation, the natives saying they have no material for ropes. The water of this river, the Lora, which loses itself in the sands of Shoráwak, is a little saline to the taste, and is esteemed ponderous.

The next day's march led us anew amongst low hills, and over an uneven country. We halted near a rivulet, two or three villages bearing to the left, with a few trees interspersed about them. These I believe, were inhabited by the Ali Zai Patáns, and were dependent on Sháll. During the night, robbery was committed on one of our Saiyads, who suffered to the amount of one hundred rupees, — his Korán, which was carried off, was afterwards returned in a mysterious manner. The thieves were not discovered, but the Ali Zai had the credit of the robbery.

The next march was cheerfully performed by the káfila, as it removed them from the country of the Patáns, and brought them fairly into that of Mehráb Khán, the Bráhuí chief of Kalát. Here danger to the same extent did not exist, but in these semi-barbarous countries, where tyranny and misrule prevail, oppression never ceases. This day I was so absolutely exhausted, and my pains were so severe that I was utterly unable to keep pace with the káfila, and the camels even passed me. Leaving the rivulet, a village occurred, near which the men were employed in winnowing corn; they suffered me to pass unmolested. Beyond it was a Kárèz of clear but badly tasted water, with a few tút or barren mulberry trees on its course; and farther on a line of undulating eminences preceding the large plain or valley of Sháll. Among the eminences, I was compelled from the acuteness of my sufferings to cast myself on the earth, and truly death at that time would have been hailed as friendly. With much difficulty I made my way into the plain, and in progress to the town, prominently seated on a lofty mound, and distant some three or four cosses, I replied to all I met that I was a Hájí. It was dark before I reached, when I learned from a soldier at the western or Hanna gate, that the káfila was immediately under the southern wall of the town. I passed into the bazár, where I met Gúl Mahomed, one of my companions, who conducted me to the remainder. All were glad to see me again, fearing some accident had happened to me, and I amused them by relating my adventures as a Hájí on the road.

I may here observe, that my situation in the káfila as regarded attention and civility, had become very supportable. Khádar Khán, who had refused me assistance, saluted me with congratulations the

very next day, when he beheld me comfortably clad in a postín, and never passed me on the road without notice; — the Káfila-Báshí associated himself with my companions in a kind of mess: I consequently had my meals with him, and was invariably treated with kindness. This man I afterwards saw at Haidarabad in Sind, where he had engaged in the military service on a salary of two hundred rupees monthly.

The káfila halted two or three days at Sháll, to arrange the matter of duty, which is collected there, and to allow men and cattle a little rest. My pains grew intense, so much so, that I was unable to accompany my friends, on their departure. I made an effort to keep pace with them, but finding I could not I returned to the town, not, venturing from what I had heard of the Bolan pass, to run the chance of proceeding alone through it.

At Sháll, I was very hospitably treated, — being lodged in the clean and upper apartment of the principal masjíd near the southern or Shikárpúr gate, and regularly supplied with abundance of good provisions. My afflictions daily became less, and, at length, I announced my ability to depart, whenever a káfila might arrive. Two or three horse káfilas from Kándahár passed, but I was not allowed to accompany them, it being feared I should be left behind on the road by the horses.

The town of Sháll, or as often called Quetta and Kote, is surrounded by a slight mud crenated wall, and may comprise three hundred houses. These lie at the base of a huge mound on which stands the ruinous citadel, now the abode of the governor Jellál Khán. The bazár is tolerably well supplied, and is a fair one for a provincial town, being the centre of much traffic with the neighbouring countries. It is situated conveniently on the road between Kándahár and Shikárpúr, as well as with reference to Kalát, and other places. There are many small gardens belonging to the town, which appear as if newly planted, the trees being young. There are the vine, the fig, the pomegranate, the plum, and I believe the apple and pear. Mulberries and apricots are plentiful, as are also melons in their season.

The valley of Sháll may be about twelve miles in length, with an average breadth of three or four miles. It is well supplied with water, and besides good wheat and barley, yields much lucerne, with, I believe, some madder. The neighbouring hills, the native region of the wild sheep, provide ample pasture for very numerous flocks of the domestic animal, and Sháll is proverbially celebrated for the excellence of its lambs.

I was much pleased with the climate in this valley, the frosts during the night being gentle, and the heat of the sun being far from oppressive during the day, as is the case at Kándahár, even during the winter. The people told me that in another month they might expect snow, which would continue for two months, during which time they would be left to their own protection, the garrison retiring to the warmer country of Dádar; and I saw them repairing the casualties in the town walls. They entertain apprehensions from their troublesome neighbours, the Khákas, who live in the adjacent hills to the east, and north-east, and who have, on more than one occasion, sacked the town.

The outsides of the houses in the town, were mostly covered with the carcases of sheep; salted and exposed to dry. The principal bones are extracted, and the limbs extended with small sticks. These flitches of mutton, and they have, when cooked, very nearly the taste of bacon, are called Khaddít by the Baloches, and Lándh by Afgháns. They are generally used for winter consumption, when the flocks of the pastoral tribes are removed to the plains of Kachí.

Besides the town of Sháll, there are in the valley, a few other villages, as Ispangalí, and Karání, the latter under the hills to the west, inhabited chiefly by Saiyads, and boasting many gardens; with many small hamlets belonging to the Sherwání Bráhuís towards the south. There are likewise some castles contiguous to the town, the principal of which is owned by Samandar Khán, a Dúrání nobleman of note.

The valley of Sháll was originally held by the Kássí Afgháns, who still dwell in the town and immediate vicinity. Having passed under Bráhuí rule, the Sherwání tribe have intruded themselves into the southern parts of the valley; and some of the villages bordering on it, and included in the district, as Kúchílák, on the road to Peshing, and Berg, on the road to Mastung, are held by Khákas, wholly or chiefly.

Finally, a large káfila arrived from Kándahár, of a multifarious description, and I was allowed to join it. During my abode at Sháll, I had received many attentions, from a respectable and wealthy Bráhmaṇ of Bikkanír, named Rúghlál. Learning I was about to leave, he invited me to his house in the evening, and after asking me if I could teach him to make gold,—to plate copper with silver,—and to cure diseases of the eye—he provided me with what I needed much, a suit of cotton clothing, and a supply of flour and roghan for my journey. My Mússúlmán friends found a kid skin, into which they placed my provisions, and slinging it over my shoulders, I followed the káfila which had preceded me.

As soon as I joined it, one of the camel drivers finding that I was going to Shikárpùr, took my load and put it on one of his animals, so I walked unencumbered. The first march, of five or six miles, brought us to Sir-í-áb, beneath a small detached hill at the extremity of the valley, where we halted near the source of a rivulet of fine water, which gives a name to the locality. There was some tilled land here, but no inhabitants. To our right was the high mountain Chel Tan, and where it terminated to the south, we descried the small pass or Lak, as here called, leading to Mastúg, so famed for its fruits. To our left were alike hills, and in front the Dasht Bí Dowlat, over which the high road to Shikárpùr passes. The director or Báshí of the káfila, was named Baloch Khán, and the camel driver who had befriended me by lightening me of my burden, proved to be in his employ. This led to Baloch Khán inviting me to join his party, which of course was very agreeable to me, and I at once became easy in the káfila. We were here joined by a pastoral tribe of Brá-húís, who were proceeding to the warmer countries below the pass. They mustered above three hundred firelocks, and as the journey from hence to Dádar, was esteemed perilous, their company was acceptable.

Early in the morning, having filled the massaks or skins with water, we left Sir-í-áb, and skirting the eastern base of the small hill we had halted under, we then struck across the bleak, sterile plain of Bí Dowlat. We occupied the entire day in the transit, and by evening gained the entrance into the Bolan hills, and having crossed a very slight ascent, we descended gradually into a Darra or valley, where we halted. There was no water here, but our people had provided against the want. We were this night highly amused by a witty fellow, called Shahábadín, who personated one of the Atchak Zai, and proffered to disclose where obo or water could be found. He imitated the tone and expressions of the savages exactly, and extorted loud peals of laughter from his auditors. I had got over the first march to Sir-í-áb pretty well, but the long one of this day proved too much for me, although the road had been good, and I experienced a renewal, in some degree, of my former pains.

On the following morning, our course led us along the valley, which had a continual but gradual and easy descent. To march was toilsome, as the bed of the valley was filled by small stones and pebbles. From it we gained another valley with which it communicated, and here, after a short distance, we came upon a variety of springs, the water of which gushed from the rocks to the right, and formed a stream. Some of the springs discharged large volumes of water,

which released themselves with a considerable noise. This spot is called Sir-í-Bolan, and the sources are those of the rivulet which has fixed its name upon the pass. We did not halt here, but proceeded until we reached Kajúrí, a spot so called from a solitary date tree, which arose opposite to us in graceful majesty, an emblem of our approach to more genial climes. Our road was throughout this march along the same Darra, and over the same kind of pebbly surface. We had seen no inhabitants, but occasional tracks across the hills seemed to indicate their existence near. During the night, the sentinels were particularly alert, keeping up an incessant discharge of matchlocks, and shouting "Hai! Kábadar! Hai! Kábadar!"

Our next march continued through the Darra, and we lost the Bolan rivulet, while to the left the country became more open. The road also became less stony, as we reached Bibí Nání, where we found another rivulet, which I was told came from the hills of Kalát. This place is a shrine of some repute, and has some curious legends connected with it. The hills here yield fuller's earth, or some analogous substance. The road winds through the low hills at this point, and enters the extensive plain of Kirta; — the river flowed to our left, and crossing the plain we halted at Garm-áb, (warm spring) or the sources of the third river we meet with in the Bolan pass. About half a mile to our left, or to the north, was the small village of Kirta, inhabited by Baloches, subjects of Kalát, but at the mercy of the predatory hill tribes. Many of the women came to procure water from the springs, which, as their name implies, are tepid, and in the pools formed by them are myriads of small fishes. The houses of Kirta were constructed of mud and stones, and amongst them was a square tower. There is some land cultivated, principally with rice, and there might be much more, were there any security.

Our Bráhuí companions were desirous that the káfila should have halted at Kirta, for a day, but this was not acceded to, although the march we had in front was through the most critical part of the pass. The káfila therefore proceeded without them.

Leaving Garm-áb, we came upon a large marsh, with a muddy bottom, and much choked up with reeds and flags. It is formed by the waters of Garm-áb, and from it issues the clear stream, which hence to the termination of the pass, was to be our attendant. This marsh immediately precedes the entrance into a series of defiles, and is not I believe to be avoided by beasts of burthen, who with difficulty wade through it. Pedestrians, like myself, round it to the right, and follow a slender path winding around the enclosing hills. In this march we had continually to cross and recross the river, whose bed was gen-

erally occupied with large boulders, and occasionally with flags. The water was delightfully transparent. During the early part of the day, the Darra was more or less open, or not so contracted as to be termed justly a defile, but on approaching a spot called Khúndillán, the hills on either side closed upon each other, and the narrow passage between them was entirely filled by the water. Previous to arrival here, the káfila was condensed, and the armed and mounted men formed in a body, it being judged fit to move with caution and prepared, in a part of the pass, which of all others, seemed to be the most dreaded. Within the defile, there was a large cavern in the hills to the right, and under it a pool said to be unfathomable; — there was evidence of great depth of water in the limpid and azure tinged water. The scenery was here sufficiently good, indeed throughout this day's march, the natural features of the several localities were interesting. Emerging from the defile, we traversed a fine open space, favorable for encampment, with the river to the right, and also winding to the front. Crossing it, we again passed through defiles into another and lengthened Darra, but wide and open; — and this traversed, other defiles led us into a more spacious valley, where there was an abundance of coarse grass: — It may be observed that there is throughout this journey more or less forage, particularly from Khúndillán; — there is also a good quantity of cultivable soil, and from the admirable command of water, it is obvious, that were the country secure, great quantities of rice might be grown. As it is, exposed to perpetual depredations, no one dares to settle in the valley, or cultivate its soil. Neither is adequate advantage taken of its plentiful pastures, for no one ventures to graze them. From this last valley, which has an appellation, I forget, derived from its herbage, a short passage cleared us of the pass altogether, and brought us into the plain of Dádar. The broken ground here was covered with stunted trees and brushwood, and we had finally to cross the river, which flowed to the right hand. Passing a few old tombs and shrines, we at length halted on the borders of a canal of irrigation, with the town of Dádar and its date groves in sight, some two or three miles distant.

I could have enjoyed this march under other circumstances, but what with its length, and the ill condition I was in, it proved a penible one to me. The constant crossing of the river, and the necessity of tramping so often barefooted, nearly exhausted me, and my feet at the close of the journey were sorely blistered. It was in vain I strove to keep company with the káfila, and before reaching Khúndillán, behind it as usual, two or three shots fired from the hills,

caused me to raise my eyes, when I perceived three or four men. They were however too far off to give me trouble, and I saw that they were moving from, and not towards me.

The magnificent pass of the Bolan, may be said to be throughout its extent perfectly level, the gradual ascent of the upper portion of it, and the slight kotal or pass, if deserving the name, by which the Dasht-Bí-Dowlat is gained, scarcely forming exceptions.

It is interesting on many accounts : being with the Mulloh pass far to the south, the only route of this level character, intersecting the great chain of mountains defining, on the east, the low countries of Kach Gandáva and the valley of the Indus ; while westward it supports the elevated regions of Kalát and Sahárawán. There are many other passes over the chain, but all of them from the east have a steep and difficult ascent, and conduct to the brink of the plateau or table lands. Such are the passes of Takárí and Nághow, between the Bolan and Múlooh routes, and there are others to the north of the Bolan. This pass is no less important, as occurring in the direct line of communication between Sind and the neighbouring countries with Kándahár and Khorasán. It also constitutes, in this direction the boundary between the Sard Sél and Garm Sél, or the cold and hot countries. The natives here affirm that all below the pass is Hind, and that all above it is Khorasán. This distinction is in great measure warranted, not only because the pass separates very different races from each other, speaking various dialects, but that it marks the line of a complete change of climate and natural productions. As we near Dádar we behold the A'kh or milky euphorbia ; — no plant is more uniformly found at the verge of the two zones : belonging to the warmer one, it stands as a sentinel, overlooking the frontier over which apparently it may not step.

Our next march was merely a change of ground, and brought us within a mile of the town of Dádar. I was unable to visit it, but it appeared to be walled in, and of some extent, containing some tolerably looking houses. The Hindús of the bazár resorted to the káfila to traffic. The neighbourhood was well cultivated ; the soil besides being naturally good, is well watered by numerous canals large and small. Many small hamlets are sprinkled over it ; and the produce, besides grains, consists of sugar cane, and the indigo plant. There are two fazls or harvests, the vernal and hibernal. The town is held by the Khán of Kalát, and the governor is generally one of his household slaves.

We halted near Dádar for two days ; transit fees were levied from the káfila ; after which, our company, augmented by Baloch traders, started for Bágh.

The hills in this part of the country describe a vast semicircle, the principal ranges to the west, before noticed, stretching away to the south, and ending only on the shores of the ocean. Immediately to the north and north-east of Dádar, are other hills enclosing the valley of Síbí, and the abodes of Khákás, Kadjaks, Shílánchís, B ár-rú Zais, Marrís, and other mingled Afghán and Baloch tribes : while to the east extend a succession of ranges, the southern termination of the great Súlímán chain running parallel to and west of the Indus. On the side bordering on Dádar and Kachí, they are inhabited by savage tribes, whose predatory habits render them a great annoyance to the inhabitants of the plains, as they frequently issue from their fastnesses in overpowering numbers, and plunder the villages. On the opposite side they look down upon Sanghar, Déra Ghází Khán, and the Kulát chiefs districts of Hárاند and Dájil. The heat at Dádar is singularly oppressive, and the unburnt bricks of the old tombs are pointed out as having become of a red hue in the fervent rays of the sun.

At a little distance from Dádar, a line of jabbal or low hills, or rather a fracture in the surface, extends from east to west across the country, and separates the particular valley of Dádar from the great plain of Kach Gandáva. The road throughout this fissure is level, but the broken mass assumes a variety of fantastic shapes, and may have a breadth of three or four miles. Where it ends, the hard level plain begins.

I had scarcely commenced the march from Dádar, when I was seized with vomiting, occasioned I knew not by what, unless by the water, which here has a bad repute. It was night when we marched, both to avoid the heat of the day, and that the manzil or place of intended halt was distant. The káfila soon passed me, and helpless I laid myself on the ground, and awaited morning. I was fearful of losing the road. At the dawn of day, I arose and continued my way. I passed through the fracture just noted and had reached the plain beyond, when my disorder drove me to seek the shade of some low hills to the right of the road. Here two or three horsemen of the káfila who had stayed behind came to me. They kindled a fire, their object being to smoke chirss. They encouraged me to proceed, telling me I should find the káfila at a village, the trees of which were visible in the far distance. I strove to do so, but was soon redriven from the road, and this time, the bank of a dry water course afforded me shade. At length with my strength somewhat renewed, I again followed the road, and by evening approached the village of Hírí.

Here was a river, the Nárí, to which I hastened to appease my thirst; and on crossing a ravine to regain the road, a ruffian assailed me with a drawn sword, and ordered me to accompany him. Clearing the ravine, he examined my postín, and the kid skin bag containing the remnant of my flour, which I chanced to have with me this day. Much parley ensued, he insisting I should follow him, and I objecting to do so. I told him if he was a robber, as his weapon made him superior, to take what he wanted, — to this, he replied, by putting his fore finger between his teeth, and shaking his head, signifying, I presume, that he was not one. I was unable to prevail upon the fellow to depart, when a Hindú suddenly made his appearance. Neither I, or my oppressor had before seen this man,—an angel could not, however, have more seasonably interposed. The Baloch still unwilling to relinquish me, said I was a thief, but the Hindú would not admit it, and asking me if I belonged to the káfila, told me, it was on the other side of the village. On hearing this, and that I had friends near, the fellow relaxed, and I and the Hindú passed over to the other side of the ravine. The Hindú separated from me, and I made for the road, when the Baloch looking and seeing me alone, called me to return, and as an inducement plied me with stones. Having the ravine between us, and descrying three or four men in a cultivated field adjacent, I paid no farther attention than to return him his missiles, and the abusive epithets he liberally bestowed, with them.

I next went to the men in the field, and told them the Baloch striking across the plain was a robber. My tattered garments were again explored, and certainly had I possessed any thing worth plunder, it would have been taken. As it was, the elder of the men remarked “what could be plundered from you?” and in the same breath, asked me to exchange my shoes for a pair of cháplas, an uncouth kind of sandal. I refused, although the shoes were old, and absolutely worn out, as they had become convenient to my feet;—yet my refusal was of no avail, and the shoes were taken from me; the men asserting that I gave them of my free will, and I that they were forcibly seized. It was promised that a youth should conduct me to the káfila, which was said to be two cosses distant. The good Hindú, it seemed had told me it was here, to disentangle me from the Baloch. May his righteous purpose excuse the untruth. The old man, however, on putting the shoes on his feet, said they were not worth exchanging, and returned them. He then placed his fingers upon his eyes, and swore that he was a Mússúlmán, and no thief. He invited me to pass the night at his house, by way of atonement,

and assured me of good entertainment. I might have trusted myself with him, as this application of the fingers to the eyes is equivalent to a most solemn oath, but it was my object to gain the káfila. I therefore declined, and the road being pointed out to me, I struck into it.

Night coming on, I repaired to some old sepulchres or zíárats on the road side, to await the rising of the moon, the better to find my way. By moonlight I proceeded, but it was soon manifest that I had missed the road, and ignorant of its direction, I thought it best to tarry until morn, so I wrapped myself in my postín and went to sleep.

At day break, I observed, not far off, a man of respectable appearance, of whom I enquired the road, stating that I had gone astray. He lamented that a Mússúlmán, for such he supposed me, should have been compelled to sleep on the plain, and leaving his own path, he guided me into mine. In a short time I made a village, situated on the Nárí river. The river occupied a wide bed, and the banks on either side were high. I descended into the bed, and under shelter of the near bank, I passed the village unobserved. Beyond it, I took my frugal breakfast, soaking my scraps of bread in the waters of the stream.

Here I was accosted by a youth, who also wanted to exchange shoes. He had himself a new pair, and perfectly sound. The exchange would have been to his prejudice, as I pointed out to him, yet I could not afford to part with my old and easy ones. He did not however insist. I was hardly yet aware that a Baloch generally prefaces robbery, by proposing exchange, or by begging some article, as the plunderer of the Afghán tribes near Kándahár first asks his victim if he has any tobacco or snuff. The brother of Mehráb Khán of Kálát was encamped near this village with a party of horse.

From the river bed I passed through a fairly wooded jangal of small bér, mimosa, and tamarisk trees. It swarmed with the pastoral Bráhúí tribes, who had recently arrived, and taken up their winter quarters here. Beyond this belt I reached the small town of Hájí Sheher, held by Mahomed Khán, the Sirdár of the Sherwání Bráhúís. It was walled in, and contained a small but good bazár. The two domes of its principal masjids had been conspicuous for a long time above the jangal. Within the walls were perhaps two hundred and fifty, or three hundred houses, Hindú and Mahomedan;—without were groves of large bér and mimosa trees. The Sherwání chief levies a transit fee on merchandize. I found that the káfila had staid the night here, but had passed on in the morning for Bágh.

A Hindú directed me as to the road I was to take, but cautioned

me not to go alone. I went on, having become habituated and indifferent to danger and adventure. The same kind of light jangal prevailed. I was soon passed by three Baloch soldiers mounted on camels. One of them said to me in Persian "Ah! Ah! you are an Uzbek" I told him I was not, but he maintained that I was, laughing and in good humour. This was not the first time, I had been taken for one of these Tártars.

In the town of Sháll, notwithstanding my own affirmations, confirmed by many of the inhabitants, that I was a Farang or European, several believed that I was an Uzbek. The Múlla or priest who officiated in the masjíd, where I was lodged, one day informed a large company, with an air of great self-satisfaction that I was a Túrki. He nodded his head, and winked his eyes, as if his superior penetration had discovered an important secret. Another individual seriously annoyed me by persisting that I was a Kárigar. This term I had heard in Dáman, and the Panjáb, used to denote a bull. It was to no purpose that I contended I was a "Mirdem" or "man," and no "Kárigar" or as I understood it "bull" The individual in question would have it that I was one, or at least a Kárigar. A better acquaintance with languages taught me that the word was employed in Persian to express an adept, or expert person, in which sense no doubt, the man intended it. At the same place, a woman daily visited me, always bringing some trifling present of fruit, sweetmeat, &c. and craving my blessing. I could not surmise why she thought me qualified for the task, until I heard her, one day, tell another woman that, I was the "díwáneh" or idiot from Mastúng.

Continuing my route through the jangal, I came upon a deserted and ruinous castle, and then upon a village to the left of the road. It was dark when I reached a cluster of villages and date groves, which I was so certain were Bágh, that I did not enquire, and satisfied that I should find the káfila in the morning, I retired for the night to a Zíarat, and quietly reposed.

It turned out, however, that I was mistaken, and when I arose at day break, I found that the place was called Tirkárí, and that Bágh was a good coss farther on. The greater part of this distance traced the river bank. The country here was populous and well cultivated. The soil is fertile, yielding sugar cane amongst its produce; júwárí and bájara, here as throughout the province, are the principal objects of the agriculturist. The preference shewn to them would seem to shew that they require little moisture, and that experience has proved them to be adapted to the soil and climate. They subsist both man and animal, and are grown in such quantities

as to be largely exported. In favorable seasons, or when the supply of rain has been sufficient, the returns are said to be excessive ; other kinds of grain, as wheat and barley are raised, forming the spring crops, and the 'Jet cultivators or zamíndárs are allowed to be very skilful.

I found the káfila at Bágh, between the town and river, and in a grove of mimosas.

Bágh is one of the most considerable towns of Kachí, although containing not more than six to eight hundred houses. It formerly was in a more flourishing condition, and many Hindú Soukárs or bankers resided at it. They have removed to Kotrú, where they think themselves more secure under the government of a petty dependent chief, than under that of the weak paramount authority of Kalát, administered by a household slave. The bazár is still respectable, as the site of the place preserves it from total decay. It has the monopoly of the trade in sulphur, derived from the mines near Sanní ; and the government officers collect transit duties from traders. I was astonished to learn, seeing the river was so considerable, that fresh water was frequently scarce at Bágh, and that at certain seasons it was an article of sale : but I was so assured, and that in a short time, the channel of the stream would dry up, and water only be found in wells dug in its bed. I was also informed that, wells made in the town or neighbourhood,, yielded a fluid too saline to be applicable to useful purposes.

Close to Bágh are some conspicuous tombs, covering the remains of remarkable persons. Amongst them are those of Mastapha and Réhim Khán, preserved in the same monument, half brothers, and both sons of the illustrious Nassír Khán. Mastapha Khán was renowned for his valour, and fell by the hands of his brother Réhim Khán ; the latter was slain by the sister of Mastapha Khán. Another tomb commemorates a famous politico-religious character, put to death by Sháh Zemán. The Vazír Fatí Khán, afterwards so notorious, then a mere youth, was a disciple of this worthy, as were a great number of the young Afghán nobility. The initiated formed a conspiracy to dethrone the king, and to assassinate his minister Waffadár Khán, and to raise the Sháhzáda Sújah to the throne. The plot, on the eve of accomplishment, was revealed to the Minister by one of the accomplices. Sarafraz Khán, the father of Fati Khán, expiated the crime of his son, who escaped, and many of the conspirators were seized and put to death. A party was sent to Bágh with orders to bring in the head of the holy man, the father or patron of the dark and foul treason. This event is worthy of note, as it was the proximate cause

of the convulsions which have since desolated Afghánistán. Of the character of the holy man of Bágh, there can be little doubt, although he has since death been canonized. He was a Súfí, and with his disciples professed himself to be a “ húsan perrast ” or “ admirer of beauty.”

We halted three or four days at Bágh, and on taking our departure, forded the river about half a mile below the town, nor did we afterwards see it. We made three or four marches, and reached a village, on the borders of the desert belt, called the Pat of Shikárpúr, or sometimes the Dasht Bédarí.

During our progress we passed a well cultivated country, but the villages were mostly either in ruins, or entire, and deserted by their inhabitants. It was wonderful to see the immense fields of bájara, in the most thriving state, and apparently mature for harvest, but not a soul to reap them, or even to claim them. The cultivators had fled before the hill marauders, who had scoured the country. As the káfila slowly paced over the afflicted land, a mournful interest was excited by the contemplation of the melancholy scenes around us. It was no less painful to reflect on the probable misery of the poor people, forced to abandon their property and homes. Nor could such feeling repress the sentiment of surprise, and of contempt for the feeble government, unable to protect its subjects, for it was admitted to be powerless against the licentious banditti of the mountains.

The village we halted at after leaving Bágh was peopled, so was the one on the borders of the Pat, the intervening country was vacant as described. In passing the extensive fields of bájara, the men of the káfila distinguished a variety, whose stem had a saccharine taste, little inferior to that of sugar cane. They discriminated it by inspection of the leaf, but I vainly sought to acquire the secret. They said no sugar could be extracted from it.

There is considerable danger from predatory bands in crossing the desert tract which now spread before us, its name “Bédarí” or “vigilance” implies as much, and truly from the multiplied robberies and murders committed on it, it has become of infamous notoriety. The káfila-Báshí determined to make but one march across it, and we accordingly started about sunset, with our massaks filled with water.

We were in motion the whole of the night and following day, passing in our track a tomb to the right, whose elevation renders it serviceable as a point of direction, there being apparently no beaten road. Once during the day, a cloud of dust being observed, the káfila was halted, the men with matchlocks assembled, and the horse-

men took up position in front — the camels were also condensed, and made to kneel. The arrangements were good, but unnecessary, — the dust, being merely the effect of a whirlwind, subsided ; — and the journey was resumed.

Some time after passing the tomb, we descried a long line of jangal before us. This at once denoted the termination of the desert, and our approach to the territory of Sind. We proceeded about two cosses through this jangal, in which some cultivated land was interspersed, and about an hour before sunset reached Roján, where we halted.

There were here two castles, or rather villages enclosed within walls. Fields of bájara and cotton were around them. The water of very indifferent taste, was procured, and in small quantity only, from a series of shallow wells or pits under the walls of one of the castles. The inhabitants, or the chief of the village and his clansmen, were not disposed to be very civil, and on a slight occasion seemed anxious to pick a quarrel with the men of the káfila.

I understood that Roján was subject to Mehráb Khán, but I apprehend my informant intended me to comprehend that it should be, as it once was. It was formerly held by Magghazzís, who were subjects of Kalát ; they have been lately expelled, or as was said, exterminated by the Jamálís, a branch of the great Rind tribe, who have placed themselves under the sovereignty of Sind.

Our next march led us to Jágan, the road through the same kind of jangal, with villages and cultivation occasionally occurring. Jágan is enclosed, and has a small bazár. We here found Kásim Sháh, the Governor of Shikárpúr. He visited the káfila ; cordially embraced the Báshí, and arranged the matter of duty in a free, gentlemanly manner.

As most of the traders, and others, of the káfila were established at Shikárpúr, and as the perils of the journey were considered over, kairáts or charitable offerings were made at Jágan. The more opulent provided sheep, with which they regaled themselves and their companions.

While competent to perform ordinary marches, I was little able to get through long ones, and the unusually severe one across the Dasht Bédári, had brought me into great distress. The káfila marched from Jágan to Shikárpúr, but I could not pass the distance at once, and went quietly on from village to village, well treated by the peasantry, a mild and unassuming people. In two or three days, I reached the city of Shikárpúr, of which I had heard so much ; — I found it large and populous, but was somewhat disappointed with re-

gard to its appearance, although reflection soon suggested that I had no reason to be so.

This city renowned for its wealth, is particularly celebrated for its Hindú bankers and money dealers, whose connections are ramified throughout the countries of Central Asia, and of Western India. It is especially the home of these people, where their families are fixed, and where are detained those of Gomastahs or agents located in foreign countries.

As the city is not understood to be one of great antiquity, it is possible that the influx of Hindús to it, is not of very distant date, and that it was occasioned by the fluctuations of political power. As the existence of some great centre of monetary transactions, in this part of the world, was always indispensable for the facilities of the commerce carried on in it, it is not unlikely, looking at the facts within our knowledge connected with the condition of the adjacent country during the last two centuries, that Múltán preceded Shikàrpùr as the great money mart; and that from it the Hindús removed, converting the insignificant village of the chace, into a city of the first rate and consequence.

Shikàrpùr no doubt attained its high rank under the Dúrání monarchy of Afghánistán, and much of the prosperity of its bankers was due to the vicious operation of that institution, and to the errors of the Dúrání character. Many enriched themselves by loans to the ministers of state, generally careless financiers; and by acting as treasurers to nobles, who deposited with them the spoils of their provinces and governments, and who subsequently died without revealing the secret to their heirs.

The fall of the Dúrání empire has been accompanied by a correspondent decline at Shikàrpùr, both by depriving its capitalists of one great source of their gains, and by causing an uncertain and disturbed state of affairs in the surrounding countries. This decline has moreover been aided by the growth of a strong power in the Panjáb, and by the consequent renovation of its trade, and commercial marts. Many of the former bankers of Shikàrpùr have since established themselves in the cities of Múltán and Amratsir, — the latter, at the present day, rivalling the importance of Shikàrpùr at its proudest epoch.

It is not unlikely, that the decline of Shikàrpùr, and the breaking up of its monopoly, may be ultimately favorable to the regions around; for its influence, pushed beyond its legitimate exercise, was, it may be suspected, injurious on the whole. — It was so grasping, that not only by accommodating the various governments did it an-

ticipate their revenues, — but it seriously depressed agriculture by absorbing, in return for advances, the produce of the soil. In fact, the unlimited command of capital possessed by the Shikárpúris, placed at their disposal the entire resources of the state, and of the country, with the profits of foreign and domestic trade. All were poor but themselves; — and their wealth was noxious to the general community, and unhallowed, as all wealth must be, acquired from the necessities and impoverishment of others.

To the curious in Dúrání history, it may be pointed out that, from Shikárpúr were supplied the funds which set on foot those successive inroads into, and invasions of, the neighbouring countries, which are recorded in every page of it; — until the monarchs lost their credit, and the restless nobles, no longer occupied in foreign expeditions, directed their ambition against each other and the throne, nor terminated the fatal strife, until they had involved it and themselves in ruin — a frightful, but natural result, of the system of waste at home, and of rapine abroad, which had characterized the short lived monarchy.

As a city, Shikárpúr is indifferently constructed. The bazár is extensive, with the principal parts rudely covered, so as to exclude or moderate the heat, which is extremely powerful. As usual in Indian cities, there is the inconvenience of narrow and confined streets, nor is too much attention paid to cleanliness. It would seem indeed that filth and wealth were inseparable.

Amongst the public edifices there are none commanding attention. Two or three masjids only, might invite notice, without repaying it. Some of the residences of the opulent Hindús are large and massive buildings, presenting on the exterior an imposing but dull appearance, from their huge brick walls.

The city was once surrounded with mud walls, but can no longer be considered other than an open place, its dilapidated defences having been allowed to crumble into decay. The Afgháns affect to despise fortresses, and it may be observed in all important cities once under their government, that the bulwarks have been neglected. No inducement could make Ahmed Sháh order a trench to be fashioned under the walls of his capital Kándahár. The monarch proudly remarked that the ditch of Delhí was that of Ahmed Sháhí (Kándahár).

The bazár of Shikárpúr is exceedingly well supplied, the neighbouring country being abundantly fertile, and productive in all kinds of grain and provisions, while it has a fish market plentifully stocked from the Indus. There are numerous gardens in the vicinity yielding

the ordinary Indian fruits, as mangoes, sháh túts or long mulberries, plantains, figs, sweet limes, melons, and dates — to which may be added sugar cane, (here eaten as a fruit,) both of the white and red varieties. There is also no scarcity of common vegetables, the egg plant, fenugreek, spinach, radishes, turnips, carrots, onions, &c.

About a mile or little more from the city is a cut or canal from the Indus, but it appears to be only occasionally filled with water, for on one occasion I had to wade through it, and a few days after found it so dry, that I could scarcely have imagined there had ever been water in it. For the constant supply of the city there are numerous wells within, and without its limits, and the water is believed to be good and wholesome. For the irrigation of the cultivated lands, wells are also in general use, and require to be dug of no great depth.

Formerly the trade of Shikárpúr was much more considerable than at present, and it was very much visited by káfilas. The bazár still exhibits great activity, and there are many fabrics still industriously carried on, of cotton, the produce of the country. Its lúngis are next esteemed to those of Pesháwer.

While the inhabitants are principally Hindús, its long dependence upon the Afgháns has led to the location at it, of a great number of mixed and various Afghán families. There are also many Baloch and Bráhúi residents, but few or no Sindians, whom no attraction could allure to settle in an Afghán city. The character of the Mahomedan population is not good. The men are reputed ignorant and crafty, contentious and cowardly. The Hindús, are as Hindús every where else, intent upon gain by any manner or means, and the females of their community are universally affirmed to be licentious and lewd.

Under the Dúránís, Shikárpúr had its governor, dependent I believe on the superior one of Déra Ghází Khán. Its revenue, including that of the contiguous district, was rated at eight lákhs of rupees ; — at present about two lákhs and a half can only be obtained by extortion loudly complained of. Of this, two-thirds belong to the A'mírs of Haidarabád, and the remaining third to the A'mír of Khairpúr. The governor is deputed from Haidarabád, and was now, as before noted, Kásim Sháh, a son of Mír Ismael Sháh, generally employed by his masters in their negotiations with the Afgháns and British. Kásim Sháh was by great odds the best of his family, and was deservedly held in the highest esteem by those over whom he was placed.

Shikárpúr is sixteen cosses distant from the island fort of Bakkar

in the Indus, -- and twenty-one cosses from Lárkhána. About four cosses from it, on the road to Bakkar, is the once considerable town of Lakkí, which populous and flourishing under the Afgháns, is said to have contributed one lákh of rupees as annual revenue.

It appears as if it had been suddenly deserted, the houses yet being entire and habitable. It now affords shelter merely to marauders. In the same direction, and on the bank of the Indus, opposite to Bakkar, is Sakkar, once a large town, and alike in ruins. This tract, with the fortress in the river, was held by the Dúránís, while Rorí, a large town on the eastern bank, was belonging to the chief of Khairpúr.

The occupation of Shikárpúr and district, by the Sindians, would seem to have been followed by an instantaneous decline in the prosperity of both. The towns in the neighbourhood were deserted, and the outcast population became robbers. I found matters in such a state, that the inhabitants of Shikárpúr scarcely ventured without the walls, with impunity, being frequently on such occasions robbed; although to prevent such disorders, patrols of horse, circumambulated the city during the day. On the banks of the canal, I have mentioned as about a mile from the city, are some Hindú faquí establishments, with some full grown pípal trees. To the spot the Hindús frequently repair for amusement, and always on their days of festival. One of the holidays occurred during my stay, and drew forth an amazing concourse of people. The spectacle was pleasing, and even impressive. Strange to say, notwithstanding the crowds, and the publicity of the day, there were Hindús plundered between the city and canal. Yet Shikárpúr is not the only eastern city, offering the anomaly of danger without, and security within its walls.

Shikárpúr has or had the privilege of coinage, and the rupee is a very good one, nearly or quite equal in value to the sicca rupee of India. It has also its peculiar weights and measures, and enjoyed under the Dúránís many immunities. It has probably passed the zenith of its prosperity, and may possibly experience a farther decline, yet its favorable situation in the midst of a rich country will preserve it from total decay, and although it may cease to be the great money mart of Central Asia, it will long linger in existence, as a market for the surrounding countries.

To the Dúrání sovereigns its possession was of the highest importance, as from it, they overawed Sind, and enforced the unwillingly rendered tribute of its chiefs.

